



Emergency Management **UPDATE**

December 2000

LCAR tune-up checks community readiness

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

For local emergency managers jammed up by the crisis *du jour*, an easy-to-use tune-up kit to diagnose their programs and show them how to make them run better is on its way, complete with instructions.

"Our main goal is to help emergency managers improve preparedness in their own communities," says VDEM Deputy State Coordinator George Foresman.

Based on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1600 standard and National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) guidelines, the Local Capability Assessment for Readiness (LCAR) will help with local program accreditation.

"With LCAR, you can use these national benchmarks to evaluate your program," Foresman says.

Next spring, VDEM will offer LCAR training to emergency managers across the



Has your community had the LCAR tune-up?
(Photo illustration)

state. The program, developed and piloted by FEMA, will strengthen efforts to build safer, disaster-resistant communities.

"The LCAR assessment walks the local emergency manager through the process from A to Z," Foresman says.

"While some of the questions will seek a yes or no answer, most will ask the participants to rate their answers on a 1-5 scale. The survey is self-grading."

Once they have finished the assessment, communities can determine how they want to apply the results.

"We're requiring those who've received federal emergency assistance funding to attend the training and pick up the assessment kit," Foresman says.

"We are not trying to mandate self-assessments," he adds. "We're providing the opportunity and a tool. How localities use the tool is up to them. However, we're encouraging all localities to participate because of the assessment's value to their disaster readiness."

The process will bring a wide range of local program participants together for an in-depth self-assessment of their capabili-

ties with their local emergency manager acting as the facilitator.

The idea is to bring the community together around the table, go through the questions one-by-one and exchange data. A review of data on current practices and programs will help communities identify areas for improvement.

LCAR will answer three basic questions about each community's readiness:

- ✓ Does the emergency management program meet the community's needs?
- ✓ Is the community achieving the goals of the program?
- ✓ Can the community commit strategic resources to meet its preparedness and mitigation needs?

While the assessment sets a national standard of readiness, it offers communities greater flexibility in addressing areas needing improvement than the pilot program.

"The process should be an eye-opener," Foresman says. "It gives emergency managers a chance to engage in a dialogue with all those in the program."

"LCAR is a means to an end. It will enhance relationships, build trust and enhance the capabilities of the community to respond to a disaster."

Some communities could meet national accreditation standards right now, Foresman says. Others may need an overhaul to meet the standards. For most, the diagnosis will show that a good tune-up will do the job.

VDEM Region II Coordinator Cindi Causey will serve as the LCAR focal point for Field Services and will be setting up the workshops.

For more information about LCAR and how it can work for you, contact her at (540) 829-7371 or by E-mail at vdemcausey@msn.com.

And the winner is ...

Your *Emergency Management Update* newsletter took home top honors in the 2000 International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) Media Awards Contest.

Update placed first in the State/Regional/International Government or Non-Profit category of the competition, which is open to the entire emergency management community.

Winners were announced during the recent IAEM Conference in Austin, Texas.



Cooperation crucial for joint amateur radio team success

By Fred Vincent
VDEM Deputy Operations Officer

As any local emergency manager knows, trained amateur radio operators who understand the emergency management function and can fit smoothly into their EOC structure are crucial to successful disaster operations.

At the state level, VDEM has maintained a cooperative relationship with the Commonwealth's amateur radio community through the Amateur Radio Relay League's (ARRL) Amateur Radio Emergency Service or ARES. The strength of this bond comes from ARRL's commitment to training and effective public safety emergency communications.

Virginia has chosen to manage its amateur emergency communications using the ARES structure rather than creating a second organization through the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES).

VDEM recognizes that FCC rules allow our local partners to appoint and organize their own separate RACES group. However, we do not recommend this practice for a number of reasons.

First, any registered member of the state ARES program is *automatically* a registered member of Virginia RACES. This arrangement recognizes that dividing the resource pool into two separate organizations is not an effective practice.

It also helps prevent conflicts encountered elsewhere when RACES activation excludes amateurs not specifically registered with RACES from participation in the government operation.

A second benefit of the ARES/RACES combination is the organizational structure already in place that has proven effective in numerous activations. Virginia's ARES structure provides a coordinated statewide response effort with standardized training, formats and reporting structures that enhance local, regional and state-level efforts.

Thirdly, the Virginia ARES minimum training requirements ensure that operators not only maintain expertise in amateur

(continued on page 4)

In the Spotlight

Donald L. Druitt, Sr., Newport News deputy coordinator for Emergency Management, recently received an Emergency Management Institute Certificate of Achievement for successful completion of the "Professional Development Series" training program.

"The training program not only gave me a chance to learn a lot of new material, but by talking to others in the program, I gained a lot of different perspectives that help me in my job," Druitt says. "I gleaned from their experiences many practical ideas that I can use."

To learn more about this and other professional development opportunities, refer to the VDEM 2001 Training Calendar or contact Gordon Barwell at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6558 (E-mail at gbarwell@vdem.state.va.us).



City offers tutorial on creating new EOC

By Donald L. Druitt, Sr.
Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator
City of Newport News

After two years of dedicated effort, the Newport News Office of Emergency Management has a new, fully operational center ready for just about any natural or manmade catastrophe.

The 6,400-square-foot, one-story structure is rated for winds in excess of 100 mph. The facility includes a main operations room, a training classroom for 24 to 30 individuals and administrative offices.

Designed to deliver a full range of emergency services to residents of Newport News, the facility also serves as a training center for emergency services personnel.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff and various city department personnel combined their expertise and experience to plan and build the center. Integrated communications and computer systems will speed the exchange of vital electronic data and information, including the latest weather reports.

During major disasters and emergencies, the city's Office of Emergency Management can access the adjoining Public Works Operations and Engineering facility for a media briefing room and added Emergency Support Function work areas.

The EOC has access to the latest electronic-based weather information linked through the main computer. In the



Calm before the storm. The administrative area of the new EOC will be a hub of activity during a disaster (Courtesy photo).

future, the EOC will share its weather data with other weather services, the public, and Newport News Public Schools via the EOC weather Web page on the Internet.

Working as a team, we successfully built a hardened EOC capable of providing mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery services to residents of Newport News. With this facility and a well-trained staff, the Newport News EOC is ready for just about any situation.

For more information, contact Don Druitt or Newport News Emergency Management Coordinator Jack Williamson at (757) 269-2900, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Additional photos and the full text of this article are available on the VDEM Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate.

Roanoke gets star treatment



FEMA has named Roanoke, Va., one of 10 Project Impact Star Communities. Get the rest of the story on the FEMA Web site at www.fema.gov/impact/impact_13.htm.

Hazmat training seeks to eliminate double standard

By Thomas Jordan
Technological Hazards Division

Have you ever been to a training session where someone told you "I would do this differently if this were a real emergency"? Did you stop to think about what that person was actually saying?

The comment implies they were performing a task a certain way because they were doing it in a practice setting. This approach only reinforces the "incorrect" method.

When the time comes to do them correctly, students can't perform because they don't know how. This can result in student frustration and a lack of motivation to learn how to perform correctly.

There are many ways to address the problem of practicing



ing the "wrong" skills. First, get it right the first time by attending training sessions and learning how to perform. This can be as simple as attending a lecture or as complex as a practical evaluation.

Second, practice often by going to team drills, using the obtained knowledge and performing the skill. It also means taking time to learn about new concepts and techniques to help make the task more efficient or effective.

Listening to other ideas and questioning concepts already

Is it live or is it a class? Hazmat training reinforces consistent approach.



presented gives students a better understanding of how the task was developed and how it can be improved.

The last way to help reinforce learned skills is to further the student's knowledge. The best method is through continuing education. Adding to the knowledge base enables the student to relate to the task and understand the finer points on why something has to be performed a certain way.

The student can analyze the task to see how it fits into the "big picture."

Finally, students can perform the task, knowing what it is supposed to achieve, what the limitations are, and what to expect if something doesn't go as planned.

In the Virginia Hazmat Program, students receive basic information in the First Responder classes. The more advanced classes help students develop an understanding of the mechanics of a hazardous materials incident and how they can influence them.

At the technician level, students learn about chemical, incident and risk analysis. They study chemical protective equipment, tactical objectives and solutions for some of these objectives. The most important lesson, however, is how to perform these tasks correctly.

In specialist-level training, students practice these skills and reinforce them with a better understanding as to why the tasks are important. They expand their knowledge of hazardous materials and how they may be controlled.

Students also develop better ways to collect information about an incident and apply this knowledge in analyzing the data. Graduates walk away understanding how to mitigate an incident and that more practice is needed to continue developing needed skills.

Training has a strong impact on the response community. By learning skills correctly, practicing them often and continuing to gain knowledge, the student will perform as expected during an incident.

To learn more, contact Thomas Jordan at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6625, or by E-mail at tjordan@vdem.state.va.us.

Partnerships key to Camp Safety success

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

This year's Camp Safety program in Caroline County was so much fun that Alyssa plans to go again next year, "for SURE!!"

Nearly 200 children, ages 5 to 12, took part in the three-day mid-summer event aimed at showing them how to protect themselves against accidents.

Topics included first aid, illness prevention, 911 orientation, drug awareness, fire prevention and electrical, gun, and bike safety.

"This unique program provided a real benefit to the children of our community," says Emergency Services Coordinator Tom Nevetral. "Camp Safety has truly become a community-wide effort to help protect our youth."

Alyssa wrote about what she learned, including why she should wear a bike helmet.

"I now wear my helmet because I realize how important it is," says Alyssa. "I learned a lot of stuff that I know will help me later on."

Event sponsors included the county's fire and rescue and parks and recreation departments, sheriff's office, Enhanced 911 Center and 4-H as well as the State Police and Rappahannock Electric Cooperative. Local businesses supported the effort as well.

"We had great support and cooperation from our local department of parks and recreation and the Caroline school system," says Deputy Emergency Services Coordinator Mark C. Garnett.

"They made sure we got the word out to our local kids. Our department contacted financial donors directly."

Garnett says next year they will include a hazardous



Stepping up awareness. Fire safety was just one lesson kids learned at Camp Safety (Caroline County EMS courtesy photo).

materials class based on a program developed by VDEM.

This year's shared experiences give a strong impetus for extending the safety message to other children in 2001. "I had so much (sic) fun at Camp Safety," wrote seven-year-old Taylor. "It shows us how to be safe in a storm or in a fire."

Contact Mark C. Garnett at (804) 633-9831 or by E-mail at carolineems@yahoo.com to learn more.

Training Calendar

Emergency Management

Exercise Design

January 9-10, 2001/Richmond

Hazardous Weather and Flooding Preparedness

January 23-25/Virginia Beach

Principles of Emergency Mgmt.

February 6-8/Williamsburg

Basic Public Information Officer Course

February 21-23/Williamsburg

ISC/EOC Interface

February 27-28/Newport News

Reservist Training

Mobile CP Orientation

December 7-8/Richmond

Media Awareness Workshop/ Asking for Help/VEOC Tabletop Exercise

January 9, 2001/Richmond

Search and Rescue

SAR Council

January 20, 2001/Richmond

GSAR Institute (Part I)

January 26-28/Blue Ridge

GSAR Institute (Part II)

February 23-25/Blue Ridge

Technological Hazards

Hazmat Technician

January-March 2001/Wise County

Register online at www.vdem.state.va.us/train/calendar.cfm.

Amateur Radio (continued from page 2)



radio communications but also have a solid background in emergency management. This winning combination makes Virginia ARES/RACES one of the most effective amateur radio organizations in the country — the best of the best.

Standardized training and organization coordinated on a statewide basis are also the keys to creating an

effective team that directly benefits local operations.

VDEM is currently revising our 1991 Memorandum of Understanding with ARRL to update the structure of the two organizations and incorporate recent lessons learned.

We expect the process to be complete before year's end and look forward to a continued cooperative relationship, one that has served the citizens of the Commonwealth in an effective and professional manner.

For more information on Virginia ARES/RACES, contact Fred Vincent at (804) 674-2407 or visit the Virginia ARES/RACES Web site at www.aresva.org.

VDEM takes wraps off 2001 video catalog

Virginia's emergency managers will get an early Christmas present when they receive the 2001 Video and Publications Catalog from VDEM.



This updated list features new videos such as "Personal Planning Guide for Individuals with Disabilities: Surviving the Storm," "Building a Safer Home," "Weather's Fury! A Kid's Guide To X-treme Forces," and The Weather Channel's "The Weather Classroom."

All are previewed by the public affairs staff and available for loan at no charge.

Contact Bertha Fegans at (804) 897-6510 or by E-Mail at bfegans@vdem.state.va.us to learn more.

Harden trio hits high note



Kaye Harden keeps an electronic Rolodex with hundreds of important names stored in its memory. The few times he misplaced it, he felt he'd lost his best friend. Basically, he never leaves home without it.

Harden works hard to maintain three-part harmonies as emergency manager for Albemarle County, the city of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia (the only such arrangement in the state of Virginia). As far as Harden is concerned, the university functions as a city during an emergency.

To see how Harden orchestrates this arrangement, look at his profile on the VDEM Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate.



10501 Trade Court
Richmond, VA 23236-3713

Address Correction Requested
Return Postage Guaranteed

PRESRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 436
Richmond, VA

UPDATE is a monthly publication of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. For permission to reprint articles in your publication or on the Internet, please call 804/897-6510.

State Coordinator Michael Cline
Executive Editor ... Janet L. Clements
Managing Editor...Barbara B. Bowen
Staff Writer Robert P. Lambert

Access the VDEM homepage at:
<http://www.vdem.state.va.us>

© COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA 2000